

# **The Religious Question in Mexico**

**REPLIES TO LUIS CABRERA AND  
JOSÉ CASTELLOT**

**BY**

**FRANCIS CLEMENT KELLEY**

**Author of "The Book of Red and Yellow," etc.**

---

**1916**

**The Catholic Church Extension Society  
of the United States of America**

**750 McCormick Building  
Chicago**



# “The Religious Question in Mexico”

A REPLY TO MR. LUIS CABRERA

By

FRANCIS CLEMENT KELLEY

Author of “The Book of Red and Yellow”

Mr. Luis Cabrera, right hand of Don Venustiano Carranza, has come forward with a “reply” to “The Book of Red and Yellow,” on behalf of the Constitutionalists. His work was published in Spanish at Vera Cruz, in a few Mexican papers of the United States, in the *Forum* magazine, and lately in pamphlet form by the Carranza junta in New York. Such a well-circulated “reply” deserves to have the dignity of special attention, which I hope to give it in this pamphlet.

Mr. Cabrera, as a citizen of Mexico, should, however, be known to those about to be introduced to Mr. Cabrera as an author and apologist.

My inquiries regarding his public career resulted in the following interesting statements: The gentleman is a lawyer who practiced in Mexico City, where some people gave him the name of “El Renagado,” which, being translated, means “The Renegade.” This name was applied because of his activity on behalf of a foreign corporation which held the estate called “El Tlahualilo,” and against which the Mexican Government was proceeding. I make no comment on the justice or injustice of Mr. Cabrera’s nickname. He had it. The gentleman was also something of a journalist. He wrote many letters upholding the idea of Revolution, for which he was rewarded by being made an important man in the government of President Madero, who appointed him President of the Law School of the University. The students, however, objected, and went on a strike, stating that such an appointment was a disgrace to the school.

Mr. Cabrera was then “elected” to Congress, presumably by the usual Mexican method. There he represented, principally, Mr. Gustavo Madero. He led a body in Congress called “la porra,” a group using howling mobs to support, by shouts and invectives, the policies of the great Gustavo.

Mr. Cabrera’s activities as a lawyer led him, more than once, to stir up international difficulties for the Government of Mexico. Those who know him mention often the case of the mine business of S. Gerenimo Taviche in the State of Oaxaca.

Mr. Cabrera does not love those who stand for religion of any kind. He is particularly opposed to convents and nuns. His family, however — so it was stated to me — is in refuge, safe from his fellow Constitutionalists, and protected in a convent of Catholic nuns at Barcelona, in Spain. Consistency, then, is no jewel in the crown of Mr. Luis Cabrera.

I mentioned that Mr. Cabrera is now connected with the Constitutionalists, but perhaps I must revise that statement; since recently I read in Mexican dispatches that a little misunderstanding had arisen in Carranza Cabinet councils, and that this gentleman, with two other shining lights, had withdrawn. In fact, the dispatches intimated that Mr. Cabrera had gone from Vera Cruz to the healthier climate of Progreso. His "reply," the one now under dissection, was dated "Merida." In these days of modern democracy, the old saying about the uneasiness of "the head that wears a crown," might be changed to the still more palpable truth, that there is much uneasiness for the heads that do the systematic lying for the Constitutionalist faction of Mexico. However, Mr. Cabrera seems to be again with Mr. Carranza — at least he was two weeks ago.

Before going farther, it will be necessary for me to say, for Mr. Cabrera's enlightenment, that the name of the author of "The Book of Red and Yellow" is not "Francisco Elguero," but Francis (Francisco if you wish, Señor) Clement Kelley. Mr. Cabrera made what might charitably be called a mistranslation when he rendered my name "Francisco Elguero." Is it possible that he *preferred* to render it thus? It happens, you see, that Francisco Elguero is also a journalist, is also a lawyer, also a leader in a political party, but opposed to Mr. Cabrera. Is it possible that Mr. Cabrera translated my name as he did, so as to make it appear that his enemy had been doing something very reprehensible in Constitutionalist eyes — telling the truth? Thus, you see, he might kill two birds with one stone — answer, "The Book of Red and Yellow," and doom to dark destruction his able rival. If Mr. Cabrera had that in mind, my respect for his ability increases, in proportion as my respect for his honesty decreases.

Let me make a few selections from the Citizen Cabrera's answer, and add to each one some comments in my own.

CABRERA.— *The Catholic clergy (of Mexico) are now doing the same work in foreign countries that they did in 1859 and 1860.*

Answer.— For the enlightenment of Americans who have not closely followed the history of Mexico, I wish to explain that Mr. Cabrera refers here to the French intervention and the setting up of an Empire in Mexico under Maximilian. This was done, however, not by the clergy, but through the influence of the Conservative Party of Mexico, a political

faction not in any way connected with the Church. It is true that some of the clergy, including the Archbishop of Mexico City, were members of the party, just as the Democratic or Republican parties in this country have followers among the clergy of all denominations. There have always been certain clergymen of Mexico in the Liberal Party, and certain clergymen in the Conservative Party. One might as easily blame the Catholic clergy of the United States for the war with Spain, because Archbishop Ireland was a Republican, as blame the clergy of Mexico for French intervention because Archbishop Le Bastida was a Conservative. Mexico at that time was suffering as it suffers to-day — from revolution. As Mr. Cabrera himself states, it was a far more bloody revolution than even the one of which he is a distinguished leader. He says himself that the old revolution affected his country far more deeply than the present one. That explains much. Sick at heart, the leaders of the Conservative Party invited the intervention, as Mr. Cabrera says, of Spain, France and England. France intervened and, with the consent of the Conservative Party, an emperor was sent to Mexico. France did not intend to permanently occupy the country; but did intend to uphold the Empire until such time as it was properly established. The Empire, however, was to be Mexican, not French. The country was given a constitution. All promised well enough; but the Empire idea was not in accord with the Monroe Doctrine. The setting up of a foreign ruler, however, could scarcely have meant the enslaving of Mexico. William of Orange became King of England on the invitation of an English party, and, while the Irish have presumed to doubt his success, English historians have been rather kind to him. George the First of England was a German. He could not even speak the English language; but he set up a dynasty which has adopted, and has been adopted by, the English. One of German George's descendants is busy to-day fighting his ancestors. So, even if Maximilian's government had been successful, that would not have meant necessarily the curtailing of the liberties of the Mexicans. It might even have meant something like the prosperity of England.

Mr. Cabrera asserts that the Catholic clergy set up the Maximilian government, while, as a matter of fact, the clergy were just as much divided over the question of finding means to stop the bloodshed and warfare and destruction of 1860 as were the rest of the people. Mr. Cabrera may be a lawyer, but he evidently is not a logician. It seems that if he can find the name of a single Catholic clergyman who had anything to do with a movement of which he himself does not approve, he considers it sufficient reason for condemning all the Catholic clergy and the whole Catholic Church of Mexico. A schoolboy would reason better. Was the



Episcopal Church responsible for the Southern Confederacy because an Episcopal bishop, Polk, fought in the Confederate ranks?

CABRERA.— *The people of the United States have been led to believe that the Catholic religion in Mexico has no freedom whatever.*

*Answer.*— Very true; but they have been led to believe it because it has been proven to them, and that in the most effective way possible — by Mr. Luis Cabrera himself, as I will presently show.

CABRERA.— *The Catholic clergy (of Mexico) have invoked the aid of the American Catholic Church for the purpose of obtaining the influence of their country, and even its intervention against Mexico, to destroy the work of Juarez.*

*Answer.*— The Catholic clergy of Mexico have done nothing of the kind. They have been living very quietly in exile at different points in the United States on the charity of their fellow Catholics; for they came to us denuded of all they had, some of them dressed as peons, through the zeal for “religion and liberty” of Mr. Cabrera and his friends. When American Catholics saw their sad condition, they were filled with indignation, and this indignation was not confined to Catholics alone, but was shared by Protestants. Then Americans began to study Mexico and learned about the Laws of Reform. We knew that no country calling itself a democracy can live under such tyranny; so we, Catholics as well as Protestants — but all Americans — called the attention of our Government to these laws, and told our people exactly what the Constitutionalists aimed at. The Mexican clergy had nothing whatever to do with the matter. It was *Americans* who pointed out to the *American* Government the deception practiced by the Carranzistas; and *Americans* will continue to point this out, until Mexico begins to learn that democracy and tyranny are not synonymous terms.

CABRERA.— *The propaganda of the Mexican bishops and clergy in the United States aims at making the Constitutionalists appear as denying guarantees of liberty and as persecuting the Roman Catholic clergy.*

*Answer.*— There was no need of such a propaganda. Mr. Cabrera himself says that religious bodies should be absolutely without what he calls “temporal power”; by which he means that the Church (and this includes all denominations, as he specifically states) should have no right to own any buildings, any land, any investments within the territory of Mexico. Should any church own land, buildings or investments, they must be confiscated at once to the State, which is justified in either using them itself for its own purposes, selling them, or giving them to private citizens. The Church can not inherit or transfer anything it possesses;

in other words, nothing can be set aside for the endowment of religious institutions; nor can a church have any real possessions whatever. The State, he claims, has a right to determine how many churches the people need, no matter how many they built. The State has a right to take church property and do as it pleases with it. The clergy, he contends, have no right to hold property, and if they do hold it as private citizens only, the State should investigate to see if, perhaps, they intend to make a religious or charitable use of it; in which case the State should take it. Of course, if the clergy intend using it for gambling purposes, or for houses of ill-fame, or mesal shops, the State could *not* take it. These purposes are presumably lawful, and proper for the preservation of society and for the good of the Republic. No clergyman should, according to Mr. Cabrera, speak about politics or take any interest whatever in the political affairs of his country, or use his influence directly or indirectly to that end. There should be no trust to hold property belonging to a church, and if such a trust is made, the legal heirs ought to come in and take the property on the death of those who compose the trust. That this has been done Mr. Cabrera himself asserts, for he says that "the Church often lost her property by its being demanded by the legal heirs of the apparent owner." These are just a few of the admissions that Mr. Cabrera makes. I do not think that the Mexican bishops and clergy could go any farther than Mr. Cabrera has gone.

As to the charge that the Constitutionals persecuted the Roman Catholic clergy, Mr. Cabrera will perhaps remember that the list of murders, robberies, tortures, etc., made in "The Book of Red and Yellow" were quite numerous and were mostly given under oath.

It may also be a matter of interest to the gentleman to know that the only activity the Mexican bishops exiled in the United States showed was when some indignant Americans proposed intervention. Then, to a man, the Mexican clergy used their influence on their Catholic brethren in the United States *to oppose such intervention*. How do I know this? Because, for the good of Mexico, as I thought, I myself was in favor of intervention, and it was through the influence of the Mexican bishops that I changed my mind and actively interested myself before the American Government in opposition to it; as is shown clearly by my correspondence with the President and the Secretary of State. If Mr. Cabrera thinks that by these false charges against the Mexican clergy he is going to raise up enemies for them among their people, he will have to reckon with the translation and circulation in Spanish of these letters among the citizens of the Mexican Republic. He is not dealing now with a quiet, long-suffering Mexican Hierarchy. He is dealing with sixteen million Catholic citizens of the United States, and a good many others who are not Catholics, but who

know their rights, who know their duties, and who have long ago gotten past the time when they are going to stand for any nonsense.

CABRERA.—*I have written the following article with the purpose of making the American people know the real position of the Mexican clergy.*

*Answer.*—But you have entirely omitted saying anything except on your own unqualified statement. Are you a lawyer, or do you only make a pretense at practicing law? If you are a lawyer, do you always go to court with a speech but no evidence?

CABRERA.—*The religious question in Mexico has been misunderstood in the United States because the position of the Catholic Church in Mexico is far different from that of the position of the same Church in the United States. In Mexico ninety-nine per cent of the population belong to the Roman Catholic creed; therefore, the influence of the Catholic clergy in our religious matters has no opposition at all.*

*Answer.*—Well, we dense Yankees, perhaps, have a mistaken idea as to what opposition is. Churches looted and destroyed, colleges razed to the ground, schools closed, teachers expelled, religious women assaulted, Christian Brothers and priests murdered, laws made limiting religious rites, prohibition of religious ceremonies, edicts forbidding preaching and the teaching of Sunday-school, these things we call *opposition* in English. What do you call them in Spanish, or rather in Mexican, or better still, in Constitutionalist Mexican? And what do you intend to prove by showing that ninety-nine per cent of the population of Mexico belongs to the Catholic faith? Does that mean that a ninety-nine per cent of Catholic population justifies anti-religious laws? If so, logically, ninety-nine per cent of a Methodist population in the United States would justify the American people in cutting the throats of the Methodist ministers, smashing their educational system to atoms, expelling their deaconesses and outraging some of them. What kind of logic is this for a lawyer; and what difference, please, would it make to the United States if all her people were religious or belonged to one denomination, so far as her laws are concerned? The principles of justice are the same, no matter what the religious conditions are, and no matter how strong any denomination may be. The principles of democracy are the same. Must it be admitted, then, that as soon as any religious denomination in the United States is in a majority it should be suppressed; or is toleration not possible for the religious opinions of a majority? Tell us, Citizen Cabrera, who has governed Mexico for the last eighty years: the majority of ninety-nine per cent Catholics, or the minority of one per cent atheists? Isn't it a fact that the one per cent has governed? Isn't it a fact that the so-called Liberals have had absolute control, and that their oppressive laws have



been put on the statute books so as to keep that control? Isn't it a fact that your one per cent has been grafting on the nation, enriching itself, and handing down its legacies of graft to its children. Have the ninety-nine per cent no rights? Then, why do *you* talk for the nation? Does the ninety-nine per cent form part of that nation, or does the nation exist for the one per cent. We who are democrats would like to know these things.

CABRERA.—*In the United States there are other religious denominations which counteract the influence of the Catholic Church.*

*Answer.*—And yet these religious denominations have not seen fit, though they are in the majority, to deny the Catholic Church the same rights that they possess. They do not seem to believe it wise to destroy *all* liberty by attempting to legislate against the liberty of *some* of their neighbors.

CABRERA.—*The Laws of Reform aim to take all her power from the Church and to establish her absolute independence from the State.*

*Answer.*—“Absolute independence” is good. If I meet my neighbor on the street, knock him down, batter his face beyond recognition, break his arm and tie his legs so that he can not get away, then carry him to jail and lock him up permanently, I suppose I am then *establishing his absolute independence.*

CABRERA.—*The Revolution of Ayutla, in the years 1856 to 1859, aimed at despoiling the Church of her economical power and her social influence, and should, therefore, have put the Church in a condition which, apparently unjust and disadvantageous, was really the only possible means to make the Catholic clergy impotent.*

*Answer.*—So that was the object of the revolution: to render the Catholic clergy impotent, to make it impossible for the religious leaders of ninety-nine per cent of the people to lead, to counteract their influence and to make them slaves of the one per cent? That this was “unjust and disadvantageous” is certainly apparent; the idea being an application of the old saying that “the only good Indian is a dead Indian,” and the only way to have religion is to suppress it.

CABRERA.—*Maximilian himself did not dare to destroy the work done during the time of Juarez.*

*Answer.*—Was that the reason why Juarez shot Maximilian? But your statement is perfectly true. Why did Maximilian not repeal the Laws of Reform? Because French influence forced him to make a secret compact with Napoleon III. that he would not do so. It was *foreign*, and not *Mexican*, influence that upheld the Laws of Reform. Maximilian's

action was directly contrary to the agreement he made with Miramon when the crown was offered him. It was the most unpopular thing Maximilian did; and it helped to dethrone him. But where, O Citizen Cabrera, is now your argument that Maximilian was governed by the Catholic clergy? You are still limping terribly on the side of your logic.

CABRERA.— *At the present time there are in the Mexican Constitution some precepts which correspond to the Laws of Reform, and, according to the same Constitution, the laws and the authorities must enforce them.*

*Answer.*— But, my dear Sir, there are other precepts in the Constitution of your country which concern “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Must not “all authorities and laws” enforce these also? Then, why is your Don Venustiano governing by edicts? Why have you set aside all the other provisions of the Constitution except the anti-religious ones? Why have you had a dictatorship for over fifty years? Why have you had no honest elections? You defend the anti-religious acts of General Diaz, who made a football of the Constitution, and you are a Cabinet officer of Carranza who has made a lost golf ball of it.

CABRERA.— *The proposition of the Constitutional Government regarding the Catholic Church of Mexico is only to strictly enforce the Laws of Reform, which up to now have been violated.*

*Answer.*— And yet you say that they were apparently “unjust and disadvantageous,” while Juarez said that they were “tyrannical.” You say you want peace in Mexico, and you say also that the Catholics have no right to agitate for a repeal of tyrannical laws, or to ask for any relief, while ninety-nine per cent of the people are Catholic. If these laws only must be enforced, and the ninety-nine per cent have no right whatever to express their desire to be relieved of them, please tell the American people, and the Mexican people, too, in what the government you desire differs from that of an absolute monarchy. Do you want a democracy, or do you want a perpetual tyranny? You can not have both at the same time.

CABRERA.— *These laws must remain.*

*Answer.*— Surely! The one per cent wants them. Then it is tyranny you want. Americans are grateful to you for telling them frankly what to expect of you. That statement we will proceed also to lay before the Washington authorities, who have been laboring under the impression that you want *liberty* in Mexico. Once more, we beg to assure you, that you are not dealing with the Mexican clergy. You are dealing with American citizens, who believe in a republican form of government and the elemental principles of liberty.

CABRERA.— *The Church should be without temporal power, and as an organized body should not interfere in political matters.*

*Answer.*— So that if the Catholics, or the Presbyterians, or Methodists, or any other religious body in Mexico that now exists, or might exist in the future, desires to change the laws which oppress them, they would have no right to make such propositions. Carry this out logically. If there is a tariff law in Mexico which oppresses and renders impossible of operation the hemp industry of Yucatan, and the merchants band themselves together to agitate for such changes as will give them the right to exist, new Laws of Reform will have to be passed to take away from these merchants all their citizenship rights, and to prevent them from expressing an opinion, voting, or doing anything else to save themselves. Is that the idea?

CABRERA.— *We Constitutionalist are Catholic; Villistas are Catholic; Zapatistas are Catholic as well.*

*Answer.*— How long is it since you attended Mass?

CABRERA.— *The Constitutionalist Party could not intend to prevent Catholics, who are practically the entire Mexican people, either from professing their religion, or from taking a part in political matters.*

*Answer.*— Well, they made a very good attempt at it, anyhow. Catholics may profess their religion in Mexico, of course, *provided they do not profess it openly*. They can *think* that they are Catholics, but it is dangerous to say that they are Catholics. If they say that they are Catholics, for example, they could not hope to be Presidents or Cabinet officers, or Judges, or Senators, or *Jefes Politicos*, or even superintendents of street cleaning; but it would be conceded probably that they could hold the minor offices. They might dig ditches, sweep out the public buildings, or herd sheep. There is no actual objection to Catholics working with their hands, provided they do not interfere with any remunerative job desired by the one per cent of Liberals. They may vote, of course, but then *they must not count the votes*; neither must they make political speeches, nor write about politics. In other words, they may be “hewers of wood and drawers of water.” They are permitted to exist as long as they pay their taxes into the treasuries, which are under the control of the gracious Constitutionalist, and which are for their personal use.

CABRERA.— *The Mexican clergy, and generally, the Church, abstained for a long time from taking any part in our politics.*

*Answer.*— One of the most necessary things for a lawyer in drawing up a brief is to remember in the second paragraph what he said in the

first. Evidently Mr. Cabrera is not a good lawyer, because this statement is in direct contradiction to about every other statement he made in his excellent "reply."

CABRERA.— *During the government of General Diaz, the clergy did not intend to organize themselves for political battles. On the other hand, they appeared as strictly submitted to the laws of the country.*

Answer.— Then why did you and your fellow Constitutionalists rebel against the government of General Diaz? It seems to have been quite your ideal. You do not obey any part of the Constitution except that part which suppresses the clergy; neither did General Diaz for a long time. But you were not satisfied with that. You arranged a little revolution to put him out of office. You did it, you say, because you wanted him to obey the Constitution; but now you are objecting to the clergy because they obeyed it. Would you, please, Citizen, tell us just what you do want? Frankly, your type of mind is beyond ordinary comprehension. Why, then, do you charge that the Catholic clergy were allied with Diaz, when you confess that they simply obeyed the laws and did not interfere in politics?

CABRERA.— *When General Diaz retired from power and Mr. Francisco Leon de la Barra occupied the Presidency, the Catholic clergy thought that the time was come when they should organize themselves for the political struggle. Therefore, a political party was formed under the auspices of the Catholic clergy and chiefly composed of landlords.*

Answer.— But later on you state that this party won considerable success at the polls; in fact, had thirty per cent of the representatives of Congress. Are the landlords in such a tremendous majority in Mexico that they could elect so many? We understood in the United States that in Mexico there were a few landlords who oppressed the overwhelming majority of the people. Then we understand that the Constitution gives only one vote to each person. Which is wrong—our understanding of the Constitution and of the proportion of landlords to the people, or your statement that the landlords chiefly composed the new party? It is either one or the other. Which horn of the dilemma is the more comfortable for you to sit upon? Again, perhaps you will remember that no political parties were permitted to actively exist under General Diaz, but you state that when the Catholic de la Barra became President, political parties could exist. Then the Catholic President was trying to give you a democracy? Now, then, wasn't it a democracy you wanted? If you did not want that, what objection had you to General Diaz? If you did want it, wherein lay the crime of de la Barra?



CABRERA.— *The Catholic clergy began to make the propaganda of the Catholic Party first in a rather discreet way.*

*Answer.*— Thank you.

CABRERA.— *But afterwards they did it openly.*

*Answer.*— Which, of course, is reprehensible, because the Liberals did their work in secret lodges.

CABRERA.— *And by oppressing the masses.*

*Answer.*— How? Did they forbid the masses to vote, to own property, to leave what they had to the cause they considered most worthy? Did they take away their houses from them, or their investments? Did they forbid them citizenship rights? Explain. That is just what the Constitutionalists did to the Catholic clergy. Did the clergy teach them that? How did they do it? They were not in power. They had no governmental influence. Oppression of the masses are big words to use, but they require some elucidation.

CABRERA.— *When de la Barra was provisional President, the Catholic Party intended to rob the revolution of the fruits of its triumph by appointing the same de la Barra as a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic.*

*Answer.*— Was de la Barra a citizen of Mexico? What says the Mexican Constitution? Did he have a right to run for President? Did the people have a right to elect him? Who was to be the final judge, the Constitutionalists or the people? Then, wherein lay the crime against the rights of the people of any party nominating *any* citizen, or *any* citizen running, for the office of President? Truly, your ideas of a Republic are strangely at variance with those recognized by other nations. But a more important matter is that the Catholic Party *did not nominate de la Barra, and that he did not run for President.* There were only two candidates for President at that election — Madero and Reyes. Another point: did not Madero himself praise the Catholic Party as the first fruit of his revolution, hailing it as a sign of the liberty of organization which his government was going to inaugurate in Mexico, and did he not thus praise the party even in the Senate chamber?

CABRERA.— *In the elections of 1911, the candidacy of the Constitutional-Progressive Party won against the candidacy of the Catholic Party, and since that moment it (the Catholic Party) became one of the principal enemies of the government of Mr. Francisco I. Madero.*

*Answer.*— From what I have heard from Mexican Catholics, they were all inclined to consider Madero as one willing to grant them more justice

than any previous President had granted. The bishops especially seemed rather favorably disposed toward him; but, even if they had been against him, Mr. Cabrera can give the reason. Madero himself decided that not more than thirty Catholic deputies would be permitted to sit in Congress. Mr. Cabrera was the gentleman to whom was assigned the task of carrying out these orders. He refused to accept fifty credentials from elected representatives who were Catholics, and some of even those representatives who were not Catholics but who were decent men. The reasons given for rejection were varied: one was that the form of certificate was not legal; but in order to find this out, Mr. Cabrera must have used the X-ray, for he did not even take the trouble to break the seals on the credentials. When he was taxed with this wholesale ignoring of the will of the people, he stated, in full assembly of the Credentials Committee, that "*above injustice was the convenience of the Constitutionalist-Progressive Party.*" Let me see, does Mexico exist for the good of her people, or for the convenience of the Constitutionalist-Progressive Party?

CABRERA.—*The Catholic clergy, both directly and through the Catholic Party, was one of the principal factors in the fall of Madero; and though their candidate for the Presidency was not Huerta, it is a matter of fact that their leader — de la Barra — was in the Cabinet which decreed the murder of Madero and Pino Suarez.*

Answer.—The murder of Madero and Pino Suarez was decreed by three men well known to Mr. Cabrera, and not by the Huerta Cabinet, nor by General Huerta himself. But even if the Cabinet had decreed it, the fact that de la Barra was in the Cabinet would prove only de la Barra's guilt. He was not the candidate of the Catholic Party for President, nor was he the leader of the party, or even a member of the party. The Catholic clergy had nothing to do with the fall of Madero, as Mr. Cabrera knows; for in the fall of Madero the Catholic people of Mexico lost their last chance for even a semblance of justice. Mark well, I do not say *justice*; I say a *semblance* of justice. The Catholics of Mexico had been oppressed so long that even the semblance would have satisfied them.

CABRERA.—*Afterwards the Catholic Party secured important positions for its principal leaders in the government of Huerta, and afterward supported the candidacy of Mr. Frederic Gamboa for President of the Republic.*

Answer.—The party had named itself "Catholic" without the consent of the Church. The Church had nothing to do with the rebellion against Madero, as is proved by the collective pastoral of the bishops issued in January, 1913, at Zamora, which condemned the rebellion in the most public manner and to all the faithful. For the purpose of winning

over the Catholic Party, Huerta appointed a Catholic to his Cabinet. Congress would not permit him to accept. The Catholic Party, too, was dissatisfied, because it recognized the fact that the appointment was only a bid for a support which it could not consistently give to General Huerta.

CABRERA.— *This work was done, not through the individual efforts which a man has a right to give to any political party, but by using the religious influence of the clergy upon the people — the pulpit and the confessional.*

Answer.— If ninety-nine per cent of the people of Mexico were Catholic, as you say, and the Catholic clergy really used their influence through "the pulpit and the confessional" upon them, where would the Constitutionalists be to-day? The fact that there are Constitutionalists at all is the most striking proof that the clergy did not interfere in politics in any such way.

CABRERA.— *During the struggle against Huerta, the adverse and unjust opinion found in all cities occupied by the Constitutionalists was a surprise to them. It seemed to be a paradox.*

Answer.— All the cities, did you say? But you tried to impress upon Mr. Lind, the representative of President Wilson, that the people were all for you. Now it appears that they were all against you. But you want a democracy. Then what were you fighting for, and by what right do you fight now? Who rules, anyhow, or at least who is supposed to rule? You decide what you think the people ought to have, then you tie the thing up into a ball and force it down their throats at the point of a bayonet. It is no wonder that the Mexicans are being choked.

CABRERA.— *The strong opposition found by the Constitutionalists in some cities under the form of Social Armed Defense was not a sign of sympathy toward Huerta, but it was occasioned by a kind of horror toward the revolutionary soldiers, whom the Catholic clergy made appear as bandits who intended to take possession of towns and villages in order to rob, to loot, violate women, and murder.*

Answer.— And in order to prove that this was an unjust judgment on the Constitutionalists by the people, when you did take the towns and villages, you looted, you robbed, you violated the women and you committed murder. It was a fine way to show the people that you were not bandits, that you were simply working for their own good, and to preserve their homes and their property and their most sacred rights. But have you even told the truth about this "Social Defense"? The "Social Defense" of the different places like Moralia, La Piedad, etc., was really against bandits. When the actual troops of the Constitutionalists came



to the city they were welcomed, because the people believed their promise that they would restore law and order. After they had begun their "work of restoration of law and order," the people prayed God to send the bandits along. What about the 1,300 carloads of loot taken out of Mexico City to Vera Cruz by Carranza?

CABRERA.— *The work of the clergy to form an adverse opinion to the Constitutionalists explains — even if it may not justify — many of the aggressions committed by the soldiers against the members of it.*

*Answer.*— Again I owe you thanks, Sir, for the little concession that the murders and other aggressions against the clergy were unjustified; also that they were committed. Mr. Tumulty please note.

CABRERA.— *But it is very natural that, after a political struggle, the military element felt disappointed, knowing the effects of the clerical propaganda against the revolution, and that instead of remaining within stated limits have, on some occasions, exceeded them and tried to interfere in some questions of a merely religious character.*

*Answer.*— For example, at the Constitutionalist Convention at Aguascalientes. Does that explain the address of that strong upholder of Carranza who presided — General Antonio I. Villareal, graduate of American penitentiaries, pupil of the Ferrer School of Anarchy in Barcelona?

CABRERA.— *The burning of the confessional boxes especially was a manifestation of the disappointment of the revolutionary forces, for the abuse of the Sacrament of Confession done by the Catholic clergy when they used it as a political weapon.*

*Answer.*— It was too bad that the clergy did such a thing. They must have interfered seriously with the liberty of the citizens Villareal, Garza, Obregon, Villa, Cabrera and Carranza. I can imagine the effect upon these gentlemen of the instruction they received at their weekly confessions. It must have irritated them terribly; and, in the case of some of them, perhaps, it even made them hesitate about going to confession quite as often as usual; or, perhaps, they changed their confessors. That may explain why nineteen priests were taken from Mexico City to Vera Cruz, headed by Paredes, who, I suppose, now occupies the position of official confessor to the Constitutionalist Government. But who hears the confession of Paredes?

CABRERA.— *It is necessary to state again and again that the Constitutionalist Government had never intended to interfere in religious matters, or to prevent the Mexican people in the enjoyment of their religious freedom. The Constitutionalist Government does not intend to establish any laws which may affect religion or to restrain in any way religious practices.*



*Answer.*—That's fine; but why should they intend to establish any *new* laws when they have already all that are required, and which they say they have no intention of repealing, but have a decided intention of enforcing? They "do not intend to interfere in religious matters" at all, or prevent the Mexican people from enjoying religious freedom? Then, in that case, why not start by giving the Mexican people religious freedom? Why not have a separation of Church and State such as the United States has? Why not remove the restrictions which are the cause of the difficulties? Why not let the people build their churches if they need them, take care of them, take care of their clergy, offer some help to the work of education and assist the progress of civilization in Mexico? Why not get them working for the country? If the energies of the ninety-nine per cent of Catholics are to be eternally spent in securing the most elemental rights from the one per cent who govern with a stiletto, how can you ask the ninety-nine per cent to contribute anything to the sane and safe progress of Constitutional Government? But I forgot, you don't ask that. You only want them to quietly let you do as you please. But, since you wrote, Mr. Carranza has been recognized, and as a mark of his respect for your promises he has closed and seized more churches.

CABRERA.—*The Catholic clergy, before 1856, was the strongest economic power in the country.*

*Answer.*—Possibly. But the historians of Mexico all say that the lands rented from the Church were the lands sought by the people, because of the favorable conditions under which they were held; because the tenants were taken care of; because the children were sent to school; because the poor were fed; and because usury was not permitted. It was bad business for the other landlords, who wanted a higher rate per cent for money, like some of them who demanded from ten and twelve per cent a week. These wanted to rent their lands at their own extortionate prices. The Church was a bad competitor, because she stood for justice. It is the same story as that of the lands in the Philippine Islands that were in the possession of the Friars. It was there looked upon as a scandal that the Friars held land, but chiefly because the Chinese-Mestizo was the other landlord. This wide-awake gentleman has his way now, but it is the people who pay—they always do. And, by the way, harking back to the statement that the Constitutionalists have not interfered in religious matters; was it interfering in religious matters to throw out the legitimately appointed Vicar-General of Mexico City and nominate Father Paredes, as Carranza did? And is it an interference in religious matters to close churches, because in the opinion of the Constitutionalists they are not needed? or to say when the bells shall be rung? or what particular priest shall say Mass? or to state that none may hear confessions?

or to forbid the alms collection on Sunday? or to interfere with the administration of the Sacraments to the dying so that, even when the dying person was allowed to go to confession, a Constitutionalist representative must be present to hear it? If there is to be any new legislation in this regard, why not get up a form of absolution to be used exclusively by Constitutionalist representatives at deathbeds? The State, having all power, ought to be able to give absolution.

CABRERA.— *The clergy vigorously opposed this arrangement, because that thus their money power would be reduced considerably. Then the war called "de Reforma" or "of three years" came.*

Answer.— Does it occur to Mr. Cabrera that the clergy might have opposed these laws because they were aimed at the very basic principles of liberty and justice? However, the three years' war was not brought on, or carried on, by the clergy. It was a straight fight between the Conservative and Liberal parties in Mexico. Mr. Cabrera is constantly confusing the issue by referring to the clergy instead of the Conservative Party, when it suits him to do so. As a matter of fact, many of the members of the Conservative Party were looking for pelf just as much as were most members of the Liberal Party; and in more than one case the clergy were ground between the two stones of the mill.

CABRERA.— *The essence of the Laws of Reform regarding the Catholic Church consisted of making it impossible for the clergy to hold real estate. Such a measure may appear extreme, but was absolutely necessary . . . the measure continues to be necessary.*

Answer.— The Church was despoiled in 1859. Now, Mr. Cabrera says the spoliation must continue. But who must continue being despoiled? The people built the churches in the beginning. Every penny that went into them came from Mexicans, directly or indirectly. When the estates of the Church were taken away, only the Government benefited, and its individual friends to whom the Government sold the property for a song. When the property was sold, it was at such ridiculous prices that it was plain the Government was simply using the sale as a pretext to enrich individuals who had helped in the stealing. Some of these men became immensely wealthy. Now, no one charges that the Church sent any of the money that came from its lands out of Mexico. Every one knows that it was all used for the colleges, schools, charitable and religious institutions of the country; that the revenue was expended for the common good. When the Church lost her lands and property, and they were turned over to the Government's supporters, what became of the income? Ask the dive-keepers of Paris. One thing is certain, it is not democracy to take property that was used for the common good and hand it over for the enrichment of millionaires.

CABRERA.—*In all countries it is now admitted that the Church must have no temporal power.*

*Answer.*—Mr. Cabrera's use of the words "temporal power" is a fine example of his dishonesty. He knows that, by the words "temporal power," most people mean the possession by the Holy See of the old Papal States. This gentleman uses it to mean that no Church or religious institution should be allowed to acquire or hold the land, buildings or investments necessary for carrying on its mission. Does England, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Spain, Austria, the United States, Italy, or even Russia, forbid Churches to have such possessions? Does even Turkey or China? They do not. Is it up to these countries to learn of the slaughtering, raping, stealing Constitutionalists of Mexico how to treat the institutions that stand for religion, and that are recognized as necessary to the very existence of nations?

CABRERA.—*The essence of the Laws of Reform regarding the Catholic Church consists in making it impossible for the clergy to hold real estate.*

*Answer.*—But why? The experience of the world shows that the Church can accomplish her mission under a union with the State, or free from such a union. If she is united to the State, then the State takes care of the temporalities, leaving to the Church her spiritual work. That situation is easily understood. If the Church is not united to the State, she is free, in every civilized nation except France, to have and to hold the property needed for her work. Mexico, emulating the worst of France's folly, wants no union of Church and State, but an enslavement of the Church by the State. Her Constitutionalists now desire to go farther. They want a dead Church in a live State. Why? The answer is easy. There is a class in Mexico that believes the country owes them a living. They are the lazy political class, fomenters of revolutions when out of power, grafters when in power. To these, in power or out, the principles of Christian morality are unalterably opposed. So much the worse, then, for the principles of Christian morality. There can be no truce. The Church may be discreetly silent on some things for the sake of the poor people; but she can not suppress the Ten Commandments. Every sermon against theft is an offense. Every act of deference to legitimate authority is a blow at the supposed right of revolution. Every act of popular piety is bitter though silent reproach. The grafter's son at his First Communion, his little girl coming home with her "holy pictures" from school, the very innocence of these, his children, fills him with rage against an institution which he knows, deep in his heart, is a constant invitation to honesty, and, therefore, a constant menace to himself. This is the why and the wherefore of the Laws of Reform. This is the reason



that Mr. Cabrera has for saying that they must be maintained. He hasn't yet secured all he wants. But when he desires to protect and care for his own family, he sends them to a religious institution — but away from the Mexico his friends have made.

CABRERA.— *These difficulties made the Church find another way of holding her property without trespassing, apparently, the Laws of Reform. . . . All confiscations against the Church are lawful.*

Answer.— Of course. It is well understood. If the Church finds a way to live within the law intended to kill her, the course of the Constitutionalists is plain: the laws must be changed so as to make that life impossible. A law-abiding clergy is something that can not be tolerated for an instant. If the law is so that they can exist without disobeying it, what excuse is there to oppress and kill the clergy? It is all clear. *Que voulez vous?*

CABRERA.— *The fixing of the number of temples required for religious service ought to be made by the Church; but since the Catholic clergy in Mexico exerts an absolute government in religious matters . . . there is no basis to determine the number of temples needed in each city and town. The State is therefore the only capable power to agree with the Church as to the number of temples.*

Answer.— In one breath Mr. Cabrera demands separation of Church and State and in the next asserts that the State should even dictate the number of temples the people may build and occupy. That is why the Constitutionalists closed *all* the churches in Toluca, and all but *one* in many of the most populous towns and cities, even going so far as to allow but *one* service on *one* day of the week, forbidding all other religious ministrations, and allowing but *one* priest to officiate, who usually was the oldest and most feeble, so that there might be a possible chance that the one selected would be physically unable to act. Comment is unnecessary.

CABRERA.— *Up to this time the Government has not used such a right (the "right" to take over the churches). Some time after the publication of the Laws of Reform — especially after 1857 — the Government of Juarez took some of the many temples existing in some cities to use them for public needs.*

Answer.— Which of these statements, diametrically in opposition, does Mr. Cabrera intend the public shall believe? Why did the State take these buildings? Mr. Cabrera says that it was because the Church had too many for the use of the people. But he also said that ninety-nine per cent of the people are Catholic. Then, surely, there were not too many temples for them.



CABRERA.— *Vera Cruz is a town whose average population is 50,000, and yet three churches are enough for its religious needs.*

*Answer.*— We Americans are not supposed to be a strikingly pious people, yet the little country town of 4,000 inhabitants in which I happened to be the Catholic pastor for thirteen years, had eight churches. Vera Cruz evidently is not as good as its name, and strikingly proves that Mr. Carranza selected his seat of government wisely. Is the new rule to be one temple for each 17,000 people? Are all the others to be confiscated and turned over to the "faithful" Carranzistas for purchase at a nominal price? There will be rejoicing, of a certainty. But the dives of Paris are closed since the war, and France, the mother of Mexican irreligion, is changing. By the way, Mr. Cabrera says that only real estate and investments are subject to confiscation. Perhaps science and learning may then rejoice in the return of the confiscated archeological library and museum of Archbishop Plancarte. (And again, by the way, *Mr. Cabrera* ought to know where that library is.) But that is too much to expect. Even if the people build the churches they think they need, and sustain them out of their devotion and poverty because they want them, Mr. Cabrera warns them that the State may not agree with them, but may proceed to confiscate their property for the benefit of its faithful grafters. But it was a mighty small thing in a Minister of Finance to steal a poor bishop's books.

CABRERA.— *In 1874 the beneficent orders so-called "Sisters of Charity" were suppressed and the expulsion of all other orders, especially that of the Jesuits, was finished. The suppression of religious orders in Mexico was a measure taken to defend human liberty.*

*Answer.*— And then education for the Indians and peons died. It's easier to handle them, you see, when the "faithful" need a revolution, if they are ignorant; and in the horror and misery of war, it might make the poor dying soldier think of God, if there was a Sister of Charity by to soothe his poor wounded body, when the soul is passing out of it. But there are Sisters in Spain, so Mr. Cabrera sends his family to them for the safety he can not find in Mexico.

CABRERA.— *It is absolutely false that some nuns have been made the victims of outrages of Constitutionalist soldiers.*

*Answer.*— Sworn statements to the contrary notwithstanding. Is this Mr. Cabrera's reasoning? The Laws of Reform suppressed all religious orders. Nuns are members of religious orders. Therefore, there were no nuns, and, therefore, nuns were not victims of outrages. Those who were victims (and there were thousands and thousands of women out-

raged) were just women. The Constitutionalist soldiers were patriots. Patriots have rights. Women have none. There is no God, anyhow. What's the use?

CABRERA.— *The said laws (of reform) answer a peculiar condition of Latin America.*

*Answer.*— Which are not found necessary in prosperous Costa Rica, Brazil, Argentina and Chile, but are found “necessary” in the more degenerate graft-ridden republics of Latin America. But as Mexico, under her multitude of revolutions, has become the worst of all, when she should be the best, given the good people she has and her natural riches, she has sunk the lowest in her legislation and in her leaders.

CABRERA.— *The Constitutionalist Government intends in the meantime to uphold the separation of Church and State; and, therefore, it must not be wondered at if it takes all necessary steps to despoil the Catholic clergy of the temporal power they want to reacquire, or if it declares that no religious institution shall organize any political body, or if it proceeds to the confiscation of such estates as those which illegally exist in the hands of the Church, or which, even held by private persons, may be proved to be giving their income to the Church.*

*Answer.*— A careful perusal and study of the above is commended to all American citizens without regard to their religious views. Remembering that by “temporal power” Mr. Cabrera means the right to hold property and investment securities, here is how the Constitutionalist plan for Mexican “liberty” works out:

1st. There are Protestant schools and missions in Mexico. Under the Constitutionalist plan these would be treated like the Catholic Church, and growth would be forever impossible; for not only could the missions own nothing themselves in the way of temples (since the State takes all such buildings and only *permits* the real owners to occupy those the said State thinks they need), but the denominations could hold no building for their school-work, no club for their children, no library or Sunday-school buildings, not even land for playgrounds.

2d. Since the aim of all missionary work is to make each mission not only self-supporting, but also a new source of missionary energy later on, the Protestant missions in Mexico would always be operated with the real aim eliminated; for the missions could receive no bequest, no gift of land or of securities for their work. They could have no houses for the management of their own missionary enterprises. Their power of expansion would be absolutely nil, and their work would forever remain under the support and direction of foreign founders. An American could help in

life or in death, by gift or bequest, provided the gift or bequest was not kept in Mexico in the shape of real estate or securities. If it was sent there it could be confiscated at once.

3d. If the anti-religious laws are not to be enforced against Protestants, but are solely directed against Catholics, what sort of "liberty" is that which proscribes ninety-nine per cent of the population?

4th. The basic command of the Founder of Christianity to His Church was to "teach all nations." Mexico, by depriving the Church of the right to hold the means of support for her missions, would change this into "teach no nation."

5th. Not only does the Constitutionalist plan propose to make it impossible for the Church—or any Protestant denomination—to hold the means to carry on its missionary activities in pagan lands, but it likewise proposes to make it impossible for it to do anything for the eighty-five per cent of Indians at home. No Mexican dares give any real property or securities, or money for investment, for the purpose of erecting schools or charitable institutions among these poor people. Consequently, the missions for the Indians, who can not support the work themselves, must remain abandoned, as they are for that same reason to-day. The fifty years of the operation of the Laws of Reform have left the stamp of ignorance and lawlessness on the poor, neglected Indians.

6th. No clergyman of the Catholic Church, or of any Protestant denomination, could feel safe even in keeping his private means in the shape of investments for his old age in Mexico, or even the patrimony of his family; since a rigid investigation could be made by anti-religious officials, with the same kind of judges to pass upon the findings, to the end that the holding might be found to "illegally exist in the hands of the Church, *or even held by private persons.*" That this is no impossible idea of my own, is proven by the fact that in one case known to me, the last will and testament of a bishop was taken so as to discover what he privately possessed; and his entire life's savings and private patrimony—19,000 pesos—were confiscated as belonging in reality to the Church, therefore, to the Constitutionlists. This is only one case that came under my personal knowledge; but, as a matter of fact, there are also many others. What thus becomes of the rights of free citizens?

7th. Any number of men, in order to bring odium and the charge of law-breaking on a religious institution, may use the name of the institution for that of a political party and, without any coöperation by the institution's leaders, bring them into disrepute and dishonor; they having no legal standing before the law and, therefore, being unable to protect themselves.

8th. The laws that thus proscribe religious institutions and forbid them even corporate existence before the courts of the State, would not proscribe lodges of anarchists, socialistic societies, or in fact anything but the organizations that work for morality and religion.

9th. In Mexico, therefore, there could be no institutions like the Universities of Yale (Presbyterian), Wesleyan (Methodist), Chicago (Baptist), any more than like Georgetown (Catholic) or Harvard (endowed by individual generosity); for the State alone must have a monopoly of education, as well as the right and duty to suppress religion.

How do you like this picture, my Protestant brother who is shouting that "the Catholic Church got what she deserved in Mexico," in spite of the fact that for two full generations the Catholic Church has had to exist under these very restrictions? Do you think that a ninety-nine per cent Protestant population would survive two generations of such laws? Do you think that Catholics in Mexico were law-breakers, as Mr. Cabrera charges, when they patiently turned the other cheek and refused to rise and spill the blood of these petty tyrants? Wouldn't you naturally say that religious freedom under a stranger ruler was better than religious slavery under native-born devils? Well, the Catholic Church didn't do any of these things. She headed no revolutions, but condemned them all, as she did the one against Madero at Zamora. She knew that he who "takes the sword will perish by the sword." She attempted no retaliation. The chief charge against her to-day is that she would not foster revolution, even when headed by her own priests. And she stands to-day charged with what? Peace, nursing the sick, caring for the fatherless, instructing the ignorant, visiting the afflicted, soothing the pillow of the dying, feeding the poor, uplifting the Indian, preaching the gospel, administering the Sacraments. Mr. Cabrera says that the Church obeyed the laws under the long reign of General Diaz, yet now he wants to kill her. Had she disobeyed them his demand would have been the very same.

As I read and commented on the extraordinary "reply" of this gentleman, I wondered if he and his friends ever really thought of how ridiculous they are in the eyes of honest people; how strangely like a band of unthinking savages they appear to those who are accustomed to the ways of civilization; how utterly without common sense they stand in the estimation of enlightened men and women of the twentieth century. If he had a cause to plead, he has utterly failed to give even a probability, nor even a possibility, to its existence. If by such a statement as he has made, he wished to "answer" the charges of "The Book of Red and Yellow" in a way that might win his friends some sympathy from those who do not agree with the Catholic Church, he has effectually destroyed



his chances by conceding the truth of every charge, and attempting to justify crimes by proving that his very laws, the laws of a Republic, are themselves crimes against justice, liberty, and the most basic rights of man. To free his chiefs and himself from the charge of murder, he quaintly urges that some one said "Boo" to them. To justify wholesale robbery by some degenerate Mexicans, he urges that all Mexico is a degenerate in the family of the nations. To excuse the most outrageous of tyrannies, he coolly lays the flag of sacred liberty over the slain, forgetting that it will quickly absorb the blood beneath, and change all its bright colors of hope into the red smudge of anarchy and destruction.

Does humanity tramp the road of oppression and expect it to end in the paradise of liberty? Does Mr. Cabrera dream that sane men will grant that insanity is its own cure? Does he think that Mexico will some day say, with the stench of his rotting victims still polluting the air, with the hunger cries of her starving children still ringing in her ears, with her eyes still sore at the sight of her ruins, that she paid not overmuch for the privilege of exchanging one set of governmental grafters for another set, who added murder, rape and sacrilege to the original crimes against her?

You have led your country on the way of irreligion, Citizen Cabrera. What have you to show her for it? The old curse of the Godless. History is only repeating itself. Man learns only to forget; but God resents being left out of human calculations by leaving humans to calculate alone. He needs do no more to punish them. The pagans said: "Whom the gods wish to destroy, they first make mad." They were wrong. Whom the gods wish to destroy, they leave to the advice and counsel of such as Luis Cabrera — and the bitter end is swift, sure and despairing.

# An Open Letter to American Masons

There has been published in an American Masonic journal called the *New Age*, a letter from José Castellot, Past Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Masons of Mexico, which has been copied by several other Masonic papers. It is quite evident that the article is published with the approval of the editors of American Masonic journals; and they seem to take it for granted that it will meet with approval by the members of the craft in the United States.

It is, perhaps, not unnatural that American Masons seek to lay the case for Mexican Masonry before their brethren. No one could object to that. But, since we are constantly assured that American Masons have no affiliation with the Latin or infidel type, does it seem as if such publication will have the effect of allaying suspicion and increasing good will? There are so many good men in the ranks of Masonry in the United States, so many men who have been constantly and consistently friendly to their Catholic fellow citizens, so many men whose honesty is without question, that many Catholics are prone to judge the attitude of Masons in this country toward their Church, by the men they meet, rather than by the things they hear.

But, to-day it is an open and known fact, that almost every Masonic publication is in the hands of anti-Catholics, and that Masonic publications are, in a mild form, doing the same work of bigotry as the filthy *Menace* and its ilk. Members of the craft whom we have always looked upon as fair-minded men, high in the esteem of all, while perhaps in the great majority among Masons, have nevertheless allowed those who speak for them to misrepresent their personal views. Masonic journals seem to want to bring American Masonry into line with the atheistic lodges that have taken such a bloody toll of Catholic lives in Portugal and in Mexico.

I speak under correction, for I want to be fair, to be honest in dealing with this question. It is serious, and it is destined to become more serious. We are in the midst of religious strife, which Catholics have not invited. We believe that the majority of Masons do not want it, but how can we help thinking that there is danger of its becoming greater when we read in a Masonic journal such articles as those of Señor Castellot? I still believe, however, that fair-minded American Masons will give the truth a hearing; so for that reason I am addressing this open letter to them as well as to the ex-Grand Commander.



If the Señor lived up to some of the solemn declarations in the opening of his article, I would not invite a quarrel with him. He "stands

squarely for religious liberty," he says, and he "pledges his honor as a Mason" to that. He asserts that his heart "goes out to those who are wronged." He demands the punishment of those who are guilty of atrocities. He raises his voice "in protest before the tribunal of universal justice, regardless of the creed involved." He calls the outrages against Catholic priests and nuns "unspeakable." He refers in this connection to "the looting of their treasures, the profanation of their temples, the ravishing of their bodies and the desecration of their most sacred objects." All this sounds good. The door by which he may escape is a small one; but it is convenient. Let me point it out: "At the same time," he says, "I strive and struggle to uphold human liberty, whenever any religion attempts to strangle it" — the implication being that the Catholic Church in Mexico having attempted to strangle human liberty, those who committed these unspeakable outrages went perhaps a little too far, but had excuses. Now human liberty is a big thing; and it has a great cause. But is it a bigger thing than religious liberty? Frankly I fail to see how Señor Castellot can reconcile offenses against religious liberty while he is struggling for human liberty. Where is the distinction? Still I give him credit for sincerity. I always try to give every opponent credit for that. So if I point out to him where he is wrong, will he accept my correction kindly? I think he will, for I must think so, since I credit him with being sincere. All right then, here is some part of the other side:

Señor Castellot charges that the Catholic Church is warring against Masonry. The Catholic Church wars against Masonry to this extent: that it forbids her members to be Masons, for the very obvious reason that Masonry is a religion and is so considered by Masonic writers. The Catholic Church believes that the Catholic Church is the pillar and ground of truth. She stands, therefore, in opposition to all doctrines which are opposed to her own teachings. Thus, for example, she is in opposition to Protestantism, to Mohammedism, or any other ism that is in fundamental opposition to her. The Democratic party is in opposition to the Republican party, and both are in opposition to the Progressive party. All of them, however, manage to live together as citizens without breaking one another's heads. No one seriously thinks that a Catholic can be a member of the Methodist Church at the same time that he is a member of the Catholic Church. Fundamentally, our quarrel with Masons in this country is the same, and fair-minded Masons recognize that fact. We oppose Latin Masonry for the same reason that American Masons refuse to recognize it — because it is a propagator of revolution and infidelity.

Now, has the Catholic Church in Mexico, as charged by Señor Castellot, attempted to destroy human liberty? I merely turn to the Laws of Mex-

ico, cite them, and there is the answer. Here is a summary I recently compiled, of the anti-Catholic laws that have been on the statute books of Mexico for fifty years:

"When the Revolution came, and with it the Laws of Reform of Benito Juarez, an end came also to what little freedom the Church had. She was despoiled of such possessions as had been left her. She was forbidden to teach, which means to open schools of any kind, except of theology. Her ministers even could not dress as clerics. The law of May 13, 1873, forbade any religious demonstration outside of a church building, and forbade clergymen or Sisters to dress in any way that would indicate their calling. The Constitution of 1857 interfered with personal liberty to the extent of forbidding anybody to enter a religious order, and refused religious orders a legal right to hold property. The law of July 12, 1859, suppressed religious orders and religious societies, forbade the foundation of new congregations, ordered all books, manuscripts, prints and antiquities belonging to such orders to be given up. The law of February 26 suppressed female communities. The law of July 12, 1859, took away all property from the clergy; but that of February 5, 1861, returned to the Church its parochial residences, bishops' houses, etc. Then September 25, 1873, saw a new law which forbade any religious institution to acquire property or the revenue derived from it. The law of December 14, 1874, struck at the right of the clergy to receive legacies. The law of July 31, 1859, took away from the clergy the right to manage or have anything to do with cemeteries. The law of February 2, 1861, took from the Church her hospitals and charitable institutions, as also did a law of February 28 of the same year. To make it more certain that the Church would not be charitable, the law of August 27, 1904, forbade clergymen to act as directors and administrators, or patrons of private charities, and extended this decree even to include those delegated by clergymen. It will clearly be seen that, under the Constitution and Laws of Reform, the clergy had little power left, and the Church little chance to uplift the people."

These are the actual laws; yet Señor Castellot says that, for the last ten years especially, Catholics have been waging a war against religious freedom. If we have been waging such a war, how has it been manifested, since we have not even changed the laws against ourselves?

What then have we been doing for the last ten years that is so reprehensible? Señor Castellot says we worked "wholly regardless of the means employed." He outlines what these means were. He says we made an alliance with the "Científicos," and we worked through the home. With what "Científicos" did we make an alliance? Señor Castellot himself states that the leader of the "Científicos," President Diaz,



was himself a fellow member of the Supreme Council of Masonry. Señor Castellot, on the authority of John Kenneth Turner, was himself a "Científico." Did we then work with Masons? He states also that the "Científicos" were in power and "controlled the will of the President." Surely then a number of Catholics were in the Diaz cabinets. Yet during the Presidency of Diaz there is scarcely a Catholic to be found on the list of Mexican officials. In the latter years of the Diaz Administration, there is one — de la Barra. During the Administration of President Madero, which is praised by Señor Castellot, there was one more — Lascourain. Yet Mexico is a Catholic country; in fact, overwhelmingly Catholic. But there have been fewer Catholics in the cabinets of Mexico than there have been in the cabinets of Presidents of the United States. Señor Castellot knows that this condition not only applied to the cabinets, but to the courts, and, in fact, to the legislatures and to the senates. Does this indicate that the Church was meddling in politics? Surely if she had been doing that, she would have seen to it that she had some representation in the government of the nation.

But why should the Church be so anxious to bring about the fall of Madero? He gave Mexico what was the nearest approach to a fair and honest election ever attempted under the Republic. Under Madero the Catholic Church looked forward, for the first time since Juarez, to a hope for religious liberty for her own children. Señor Castellot and those who believe him are laboring under the impression that the Catholic party, established with the encouragement of Madero, was fighting for something to which Catholics were not entitled. Read over again the summary of the Laws of Reform. The Catholic party simply wanted to change them. Señor Castellot, according to his own principles, ought to have helped them, for he says very beautifully that he believes in religious liberty. There would have been no Catholic party in Mexico had the Catholics had even a semblance of liberty. There need not have been any fighting or quarreling on the subject, if Masons in Mexico had been willing to throw their strength toward securing that precious boon. It was all Catholics asked for.

The Señor asserts that another reprehensible means taken by the Church in its struggle was to influence the home. Again let me appeal to honesty. Since Catholics were denied religious liberty, why should they not try to exert every legitimate influence possible in an effort to gain it? Is there any reason why a man should not be influenced by his home? Is there anything more sacred to him, outside of his duty to God? Is there anything that gives him more happiness, more peace of mind, more solace in affliction, and more encouragement in trouble? Has his wife no rights which he is bound to respect? Must she bear his children

in pain, and bring them up in love and labor, yet have nothing to say about them? Should she permit a husband to banish every bit of religious consolation she has? Women are naturally more religious than men. Their sensitive natures require more religious solace than men think they themselves need. Is it not fair that the family be considered a unit? While the man speaks, under the laws of Mexico, for his family, surely that family must have some influence on what he says. Where are there more beautiful and satisfactory homes than those under the influence of the Catholic Church? Where is there more purity in the family life? Where, therefore, is there a better influence on the morality of any people? Señor Castellot's idea seems to be that the "lord and master" has the right to persecute everything that his wife and children hold dear, and that they must not open their mouths in protest or attempt to defend that which is their joy and consolation. Is this common sense? If the Señor can prove that the Catholic religion of a wife is an injury to her husband and a destruction to the home, he can do something that no other writer would even have the temerity to attempt.



You say, Señor, that the Church "kept amassing and enjoying riches, and kept counselling humility while exercising tyranny." In the name of fair play, tell your fellow Masons in America what riches the Church had. You mention prelates and dignitaries "clothed in vestments of gold and crowned with mitres studded with diamonds and rubies, symbolizing the tears and blood of the faithful." I am pretty confident, Señor, that if I took the diamonds and the rubies out of all the mitres owned by a Mexican bishop, you would very carefully examine them before agreeing to exchange them for the gold, diamonds and rubies possessed by your own wife and daughters, if you have any. I never in my life, and I am twenty years a priest, saw a gold mitre studded with diamonds and rubies. They exist, but so do polar bears — somewhere else. The episcopal rings on the fingers of the Mexican bishops I saw would not average in value \$25 each. The vestments used in ecclesiastical ceremonies are like the robes of your lodges — chiefly tinsel; and the precious stones are usually cut glass. We have too much to do with money for charity and missions to buy these things with it. There are, it is true, some old and valuable vestments in Mexico, mostly the gifts of wealthy people; but who owns them? Why, the State, since the State took everything and claims everything. Who owns the Churches, built by the piety of the old Spaniards and very often through the free labor contributed by the faithful people? The State. Who profited when these Churches and other religious institutions were sold? Not the Church, for she was simply robbed, but private individuals. Look at the fortunes that were founded for some of

your faithful "liberals," some of the very "Científicos" you say we influenced. What about the Limantour fortune; but the Limantours are only *one* family that grew rich on the robbery. Was he a Mason? You know, Señor, that when Juarez robbed the Church to benefit the State, how much the State did not benefit, but you know who *did* benefit; and you know that in many a Mexican lodge to-day are the descendants of the men who owe their private fortunes to thefts from the Catholic Church. Why conceal these things from American Masons? You want their sympathy, why not tell them the truth? They'll honor you for that at least.

Where are the riches of the Church? Are they in the churches? But the churches are not ours. Are they in lands? But the Church has no right to hold lands. Are they in private investments held in the name of others? But your laws confiscate such things by an unjust inheritance tax in three transfers. Personally, I know but one rich Mexican bishop, but his wealth came from his father's estate. How much do the Mexican clergy receive in salaries? You know, my dear Señor, that they receive very much less than Protestant clergymen receive here in the United States; and that while many of them live in poverty none live in affluence. What do the people give to them? In Mexico they give the smallest possible coin, because it is the poor who support religion in Mexico as in every other country, and the little sacrifice they make would not amount to 25 cents a year for each worshiper. You know all this. Everybody in Mexico knows. Why leave your Masonic brethren in the United States under the supposition that the Church is wringing money out of the people to support her clergy in luxury and wealth, when you know we have no luxury and you know we have no wealth; when you took all we had, when you closed our schools, stole our monasteries, colleges and universities, and ended up by outraging our nuns and shooting our priests? If, for fair play's sake you will not tell the truth, will you do it for the sake of that Heaven you invoke so piously and which, I presume, you hope some day to reach — if there happens to be one, a fact, which, I presume, you doubt.

Then why, Señor, do you speak of the "general unrest," and intimate that the Revolution was a rising of all the people, especially the poor? You know that the people of Mexico never had a chance to vote, never had an honest election, and that even the attempted honesty under Madero was a failure. You know that the officials, not Catholics, but many of them Masons, manipulated the ballots to suit themselves. You know that entire haciendas were voted as a unit, and as the *Jefe Politico* directed. You know that the Revolutionist army does not represent the people of Mexico. If it does, why did they take the arms away from the people, debase the coinage and suppress the newspapers? You know that the



people are pious and good, and that they want their Church and their religious ceremonies. You know that they still speak of the days when they could have their religious processions and worship God in the open. You know that if a poll were taken of Mexico to-day, that there would not be a Revolutionist allowed to remain in the country, and that the Church would have back her freedom; and you know that a minority which controlled the power, because it controlled the army, has imposed its will upon the people of Mexico for fifty years. Why not tell these things to your Masonic brethren in America, and let them get a fair idea of just exactly what the situation is?

But you say that you were "familiar with all the inner history of events," and you say, too, that "Masonry laid the foundation of its patriotic and disinterested work, in open fight, as was to be expected, against the powerful interests already created." This is an acknowledgment that Mexican Masonry did actually interfere in politics and openly fought against the Catholic Church. But the insistence here has been that Masonry is purely a fraternal organization, which had nothing to do with politics. American Masons believe that, and yet, telling them that such is not the case, you still ask for sympathy. You rail against the "Científicos," who were all Masons and few of whom were even nominally Catholics. You speak of their overthrowing the "whole economic system and upsetting the national credit." For Heaven's sake, where is the national credit to-day? Where is the money that Diaz himself left in the treasury? It was there when he went away, but it was not there when Huerta came into power. You say that the clergy would not "sacrifice the power which afforded them the means to carry out the works of charity begun." Under the laws where did they have the power? And why should they be called upon to sacrifice the means that might have been given them for such a purpose? Would any Mason in the United States ask hospitals to sacrifice endowments, or the churches to sacrifice their missionary funds? Then why ask American Masons to approve for Mexico what they would not dream of asking in the United States?

You certainly tell the truth, Señor, when you say that the revolution "incited by passion or spurred on by sordid interests has degenerated into the worst form of anarchy, whose end no one can predict." All that is perfectly true, but who brought on this anarchy? The same sordid interests, not represented by Masonry, but represented by men who used Masonry to promote their own selfish aims and purposes. It was pelf that the leaders wanted, and they knew those in power would give them that. They played fast and loose with the liberties of the people. They saw to it that laws were made to do away with religious liberty. They



deliberately stole the wealth that had been consecrated to religion and charity. In the name of "liberalism," they became the most illiberal of all men, and now wade knee-deep in blood. They whine out their complaints against the Church, and point to her, gagged and bound as they left her fifty years ago, to charge that she is responsible for the crimes for which they laid the foundation, and which are only a consequence of their own greed and lust. Why, Señor, for fifty years you have had Mexico in your hands, and is this what you have of it?

You say, let "the American Roman Catholic clergy allay its anger against Mexican Masonry and carefully weigh its attacks before making them, in order not to fall into untruth and exhibit itself before the public relying on theories and stories invented for the purpose." My dear Señor, are the Laws of Reform theories and stories? If they are, then the compilation of the laws of Mexico, which you made yourself, must be lies. We have cited your laws. We have pointed out only what these laws have effected. We have shown you clearly that you gave no religious liberty to Mexico. We have itemized in detail a few of the outrages committed, and which you yourself now say were committed. What stories have we told other than these? You are convicted out of your own mouth, not out of anything that we have said. But in order that you may see that we are fair, or rather that American Masons may see that we are fair, let us here and now make a proposition for consideration to you and your brethren, and to all the Liberals of Mexico for that matter, and see if you will consent to it:

Will you work to give to the Catholic Church in Mexico the same religious liberty that is enjoyed by the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Congregational Church, the Mormon Church, the Quaker Church, the Baptist Church, or any other church existing in the United States? Will you work to give to Catholic parents in Mexico, the same rights that Protestant parents have in this country, that Masonic parents have in this country? Americans think that this is religious liberty. American Masons think so. Do you think so? If you do, very well, pledge to try to get it for Mexico. If you don't, do us this favor at least: don't try to deceive your American brethren. Let them know just where you stand. Tell them you don't want religious liberty in Mexico, or you can not give it because if you do, the Church will be honored as she deserves, will receive back her stolen houses of worship, will reopen her schools and universities, will begin to lift those of your Indians that are now, because you killed our schools, in barbarism, and will teach your people the Ten Commandments, including this one: "Thou shalt not steal." We have an expressive saying, Señor, that covers your case: "Put up or shut up."

# KEEP POSTED ABOUT MEXICO

By reading the official paper of the  
Catholic Church Extension Society—

## Extension Magazine

---

SPREAD THE TRUTH AND  
HELP THE CAUSE

by securing one new subscriber for  
EXTENSION MAGAZINE

The High-Class

Illustrated Catholic Magazine

ONLY \$2.00 A YEAR

---

Extension Magazine, Drawer S, Chicago, Ill.



